

Well, as it happened, we got 128 bipartisan votes that very first time. So you see, Mr. Speaker, when you lead, people follow. Because of a handful of progressive leaders and progressives in our country that were vocal and fearless, eventually public opinion turned. It turned against the Iraq war and turned towards peace. If we and other outspoken advocates hadn't ignored conventional wisdom and hadn't pressed for peace, the war in Iraq could still be going on today.

In April, Mr. Speaker, of 2004, I started speaking from this very spot on the House floor about my strong anti-Iraq war convictions. Eventually, these speeches focused on Afghanistan, where we've now been waging war for more than 11 years, despite more than 2,000 Americans dead and nearly \$600 billion wasted and even though we are undermining our own interests in failing to bring security and stability to Afghanistan.

Over the last 8-plus years, I've spoken here nearly every day that I could to drive home what a moral disaster and strategic failure these wars have been. When constituents and others call or come up to me or write and thank me, I say, But we're still there. I don't deserve thanks until all of our troops are home.

You know, Mr. Speaker, because you've been here for many of them, that my speeches haven't just been about bringing our troops home. They've offered a new vision for global engagement. From here I've outlined my SMART Security platform, which calls for development and diplomacy instead of invasions and occupations; civilian surges instead of military surges. SMART Security means helping other nations educate their children, care for their sick, and strengthen their democratic institutions. SMART Security says we can make America safe by building international good will and by empowering people with humanitarian assistance instead of sending troops or launching drone attacks. It's the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. And it costs pennies on the dollar compared to military force.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I'm delivering that message for the 444th and final time on the House floor to speak on a 5-minute Special Order. This is the last of my Special Order speeches on war and peace and SMART Security. I'm retiring from Congress at the end of this year, and I believe part of my legacy will be that I worked diligently for peace and a safer world.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge that sometimes I've been accused of wanting a "perfect world." But I consider that a compliment. Our Founders strove to form a "more perfect Union." Why shouldn't we aim for a perfect world? You see, I'm absolutely certain that if we don't work toward a perfect world, we won't ever come close to providing a safe, healthy, and secure world for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

I thank my wonderful staff who have helped me over the last 20 years to work for a perfect world, which means peace, health, and security for all.

SO-CALLED RIGHT TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as a Representative from Ohio, a State that borders Michigan, I rise to stand in solidarity with the workers of Michigan. Many Ohioans I represent actually drive to work in Michigan. And due to the high-handed actions of Michigan's Governor and its legislature, they actually railroaded legislation through Michigan, with no hearings, to take away the rights of Michigan workers to fund the collective bargaining process that results in living-wage worker contracts.

The workers of Michigan are fighting to maintain their rights to a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. I support their rights and the rights of every American to organize and negotiate by contract for proper pay and benefits, regardless of which State they live in. The rights of labor by contract are critical to growing our middle class, as opposed to rights by happenstance that are always up for grabs, where workers have no rights and live in fear of the future.

Michigan's Republican ideologues passed so-called "right-to-work" legislation. Well, let's be clear: the bill being pushed there by the far right should really be called the Right to Work for Less. And that is exactly what President Obama called it. To quote Bob King, the visionary president of the United Auto Workers of this country:

Every right-to-work State has lower wages, lower benefits, less security for workers and more income inequality.

And they have a shrinking middle class. The UAW is right: if you happen to live and work in a State that has a so-called right-to-work law on the books, you earn an average of \$5,000 less a year than if you lived in a worker rights State. The bill signed last night in Michigan strips labor organizations of their right to collect dues to cover the cost of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement.

The Michigan law is pure politics. No, it is more than that. It is an old-school union-busting technique, pure and simple. And in Michigan and Ohio, we know a lot about union busting. As a daughter of auto workers, I know the history of the hired goons who bludgeoned auto workers back in the 1930s at River Rouge as workers began to stand up for their human rights as they labored in the dungeons of the automotive production facilities at the time.

I actually would like to challenge the Governor of Michigan to come with me and let's work on the line for a month in one of those repetitive-motion jobs

that make and characterize modern automotive production. They're not easy jobs. I would like him to install the windows on the right side of a vehicle as it moves down the line over and over and over and over and over and over again. Let's see how much fun he'll have.

A year ago, we in Ohio witnessed a similar effort to eliminate unions. Right-wing legislators moved through legislation that would have ended collective bargaining as we know it in Ohio for public sector workers. We're talking about firefighters, police, and teachers. Well, the people of Ohio broadly rejected that union busting earlier this year.

□ 1100

Citizens organized a ballot initiative to restore worker rights in Ohio, and they won. It was called Issue 2. The people of Ohio voted to overwhelmingly protect the rights of those who protect us and who teach our children.

While worker rights were protected in Ohio, up north, what was done in Lansing, intends to extend far beyond the borders of just Michigan. It will impact workers who commute from my State of Ohio and Indiana.

This is about more than just one State. In fact, this is a national issue, not a states' rights issue at all. The Michigan union-busting bill is a direct result of weak Federal legislation, and I'm talking about section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which weakens the rights of labor. Congress should overturn that part of the law and reaffirm its role in protecting the internationally recognized labor rights of every American citizen.

That is why I have joined a number of my colleagues in introducing legislation, H.R. 2775, that would do just that. We should not have individual States competing against each other in a race to the bottom. Haven't we seen enough of that?

We need to support and build back the American middle class by creating good jobs, good-paying jobs, and secure benefits through secure contracts. I stand attired in red today in solidarity with the workers of Michigan, and I am proud to do so.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Jerome Milton, Greater New Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist